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THE VOW OF POVERTY

AND OTHER ESSAYS

BY

JASPER NIEMAND

LONDON

THOS. GREEN

PRICE SIXPENCE.

198

K28v

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LONDON:
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To

William Q. Judge,

Teacher and Martyr.

**'THE BLOOD OF THE MARTYRS HAS WATERED THE GROUND,
AND THAT THE CRY 'LORD, GIVE US EVERMORE OF THIS
BREAD,' MAY NEVER GO UNANSWERED, WE MUST BE
PLOUGHING AND SOWING FOR HARVESTS YET TO BE.'**

The ancient fable of the Dragon's Blood is true to-day as ever. Where that Blood was spilled, earth opened to receive it; a warrior struck the sacred spot and armed men sprang forth conquering the World.

So with the Blood of the Martyrs. It waters the earth, and from that consecration new human harvests and fresh fruits of Wisdom spring. For the Dragon typifies that Wisdom to which the Martyrs bear witness, and those who have seen with the spiritual sight—as those who, following after, hear the tale with the ear of the spirit—these arise, warriors of the Soul, to war with and to subdue the earth; in themselves first, in the ever widening human field thereafter.

In the heart of man is that hallowed ground which receives the creative essence of the Dragon's Blood. Witnesses of the doing to death of the Martyrs in many an era, such comprehending hearts breathe a deep vow, and in each future effort towards the True, they are sustained and nourished by the Life Blood of the Dragons of Wisdom. They bow themselves to The Law, and whispering each to each that "Word at low breath" which is the Mystery-Name of the Martyrs, they work on expectant of harvests yet to be.

JASPER NIEMAND.

London,
13th April, 1904.

THE VOW OF POVERTY.

*"Blessed are the poor in spirit : for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are the meek : for they shall inherit the earth."*

Matthew V., 3 and 5.

WHEN first the disciple creates himself and is recognised, it is because his heart is vowed to Poverty. This Vow, rightly understood, constitutes his discipleship.

Who is the disciple ? What is the Poverty to which he is dedicate ? For we are dealing now with realities, not with words which so often obscure realities, and we must be careful interpreters.

The disciple is the Soul. That man, that human mind which has so aspired to the life and the service of the Soul that he has cast all personal desire aside and has begun at least to "live the life," he is the outward vehicle of the Disciple-Soul.

And the Vow of Poverty ? Is it a thing which drives a man to quit his place in the outward life, to change conditions and to violate all his natural

surroundings and inheritance of whatever order ? Surely not. Surely this were to court disaster. He who has so ardently aspired towards the diviner life ; he who has glimpsed the Soul in himself, he knows well that he must *evolve out* from all the conditions which surround him as a human being and that all which binds him, as all that fetters and weakens the humanity of which he forms a part, is of his and their own weaving ; it is a net spread by men for their own feet and it must be undone slowly and with pains unwoven ; to break it violently asunder would benefit no one and would harm and delay many : the disciple knows he must patiently endure the net he has woven until he has evolved beyond it : then the Lords of Karma themselves release him : let him not usurp the functions of his Lords.

So also with the mystic recognition which constitutes the seal of discipleship. It is not had upon outward planes. Persons do not bestow or receive it. The heart evolves it : the Law accepts it. When the Soul is self-conscious and knows itself to be, then, then only the Vow is made in truth : then the human being must complete it : he must hearken to the silver voices of the Soul, putting aside in his turn all the wealth of personal desire, of personal expectation, of individual mentality ; he must renounce upon earth as the Soul has already renounced in the heavens : he comes to long for

the immortal essence alone and a bloom spreads over his sphere ; his heart has put forth its vital sap, soon to burgeon into powers which are its blossoms. This bloom is as a light seen upon interior planes, where the cloud of ever-living witnesses hail the first promise of the new birth. By this new vesture of the Soul the disciple is recognised by his Teacher. By his attitude of selflessness—his “ Poverty ”—a poverty of the personal desire only—he may be recognised among men. He is not yet at the summit of the Soul life ; he has but entered a gate leading to a path which he has willed to tread, a toilsome and even a dangerous path, but his face is now turned towards his true home in the heavens. His consciousness is lightened of a heavy burden. The ordinary man, he who still lives in desires, bears this burden about with him ; that sense of self, that weight of limitation and of isolation in the midst of Nature which hedges him in, which bounds and binds him everywhere and from which there seems to be no escape. Compacted of desires, a prisoner of Fate, in the intimate and dreary companionship of his personal self-consciousness, man feeds upon the dry husks of Life, finding no abiding home, no haven of rest in the Nature through which he wanders, alien to it as to himself.

But when the Vow of Poverty is taken, all this is changed. The man has transcended his per-

sonal self : he has entered a diviner order of Being ; henceforward the Law of that new order guides and enfolds him.

A something has come to the birth within him which has altered the very texture of his mind, has shaped anew the mirror of his brain. And this hidden power, indescribable but more real, more vital than anything the man has ever known, this power makes for unity ; the man finds himself woven into the warp and woof of things, finds that his consciousness forms part of a coherent and universal Whole. He no longer desires anything for himself, he has taken the Vow of Poverty ; for he has found his own Soul, and finds it to be both poor and lonely, because it has nothing of its own and is nothing in itself, has no life snatched from the great Whole and peculiar to itself, but moves with the moving ocean of Being.

Thus the man has become an integral part of that Life which issues from the heart of the world, issues purely, fresh as the dawn and as yet uncontaminated by the separations and divisions of material existence. As some creature of the waters might move along the little banks of some small rivulet, might slowly and with struggles find its way into a larger stream, into a river, then a bay, then a great gulf and then at last rush with joy into the great ocean and mingle with its kind as never before, so the man has at last entered the vast and

primal waters, has touched the Source and finds himself to be the Soul.

Yet it must not be imagined that he who is now the disciple has in this moment of mystery and power reached perfection. Not so. The new-found light within himself has shown its glory and radiance upon the shadowy background of Nature and has for a space unified his consciousness. But now, no sooner is this great issue reached and its prize secured, than the new order of Life begins, and with that, new trials of strength, new ideals and unimagined efforts. The man has indeed become the Soul, but that Soul is not as yet the Spirit. The hidden path has opened before the gaze of his heart and much that was dim before is clearer now, but the shining goal is still far away, there is still much to dare, to conquer and to live.

For him who has taken the Vow of Poverty there is toil, pain even, but also a great and ever increasing joy. For that which commands the recognition and the acceptance of the Divine Order, that which constitutes discipleship is indeed the true Vow of Poverty.

What then is that Vow? Is it, as some have imagined, the abandonment of all worldly possessions, the obliteration of earthly differences and distinctions, the return, perhaps, to the communal life? This cannot be the true Poverty, in so far as it repudiates all karmic debts, calls for quittance

rather than make an honest payment, and refuses to work out *through* those conditions in which the Law has caused the man to be born. He has found himself, and in that moment he knows that he must not deny one jot or tittle of that Law of Cause and Effect which has placed him *just where he stands* in Nature, with duties which must all be fulfilled to the uttermost before he can pass on further within the Veil of Nature. Nor is the Vow, as still others have thought, the giving up all minor desires for Peace, or Truth, or Mercy as one sees these to be : it is not the abandonment of all other things for indulgence in some favoured forms of virtue. It is not the reading of our own predilections into the teachings of the Soul ; not the propaganda of our own beliefs at the expense of the belief of another : not the urgency that all shall see as we see, however our own vision may appear to us. The Soul in us is not to be cozened with the excuse that we have sacrificed so much for the truths in which we believe. The truths which we now see are relative, are often modified by our temperament, hardened and limited by the action of the brain. We cry Peace, Peace, and yet this may be a false Peace and lawful war the only true mercy. Our Love—is it universal? Our Justice—is it impartial as the sunlight falling on the just and the unjust alike? Is our insight crystalline—or does the lens of our humanity split it up into coloured light? Kindness

to preferred men and objects—does it not rob others of their just due as a thief in the night, leaving some other department of Nature to pay our debt, as has been truly said? Humility; is it not too loud at times, a favourite wile of that elemental devil which lurks in every human being? Ambition; may it not undergo strange transformations and be ambition still, having its root and substance upon more interior planes of Life than we imagine, aye, and a firmer hold there upon the resistant Soul? As we review the field of attributes, we find the imprimatur of our personality and the seal of our possession upon them all, and we come at last to see that the Vow of Poverty excludes all personal sense of possession, even to the virtues in which the personal self has pride and which it loves, and the thoughts which constitute those riches of the human mind which inhibit the entrance to the kingdom of heaven. The rich man who finds it so difficult to enter is he who loves and clings to his personal self-consciousness, to the images and forms of his own mind.

The Vow of Poverty exists upon a plane deeper than that of the mind, higher than that of human love or human conditions. It is a power—the power to say at each instant and to the Divine Law, “Thy will, not mine, be done.” . . . The power to abandon hopes, fears, plans, codes, thoughts. To see each moment dawn as ’twere the last yet to

live in each as though it were eternal. To avoid all crystallisation, the great danger of the disciple. To have no rights, no wrongs, no *mental* possessions. To see our ideas swept away like smoke, as Life now dissolves and now forms anew, and to grasp at nothing, but to look on with a smile. To be able to take or to quit, to learn and then to unlearn as the lesson broadens and the meaning unfolds, and all the while to grave within the heart that deeper lesson of charity, world-wide and gracious, whose exquisite toleration seals discipleship. To recognise finally that the Soul does not codify, builds no creeds, establishes no limits, but teaches each one freely according to its own Law manifested within each and accepting no other arbiter. To lay claim to nothing save patience, and then to exchange that for a supreme contentment. Careless of self-vindication, careless even — at right times—for the justification in the sight of the world of persons and causes with which one is identified; careless of all save that the Soul shall be obeyed; able to labour and to wait; ready to explain, ready as well to remain unexplained. Amid a deep interior peace to go forth on outward planes for the defence of principles, the maintenance of justice. Without aggression, to defend most earnestly all that is weak, poor, forsaken and needing aid. To strike home to the core of hypocrisies and falsities, yet never to wound a human heart. Never to be

caught in the trap of apparent and material facts, but to look beneath the surface for our duty and to trust to the guidance of principles. To wage war with every ally of darkness within our own nature, most of all with the materialistic brain mind, and through all these to be remote in Spirit and calm of Soul.

It is evident that he who has accepted a programme so wide as this, will have neither time nor wish to occupy himself with the errors of his fellows or the defects of organisation in the surrounding world, the defects of the surface things. He will most earnestly work for the establishment of a better *entente*, a more *human* feeling among mankind, and leaving humanity to do its own work on the outer planes, he will do that which is his at a point nearer the source; he will put his trust in an effort to inspire those about him and the world at large with a belief in the reality and the power of great principles to uplift us, and to infuse into our civilisation as it stands the breath of Life. This is to be done—and it waits, it wants doing—in every department of our daily existence. On the outer plane as it stands to-day there is no real peace, but only a base compromise with which the flaming Christ-Sword is always at war.

Not all who have taken the Vow wear an aspect of sweetness and amiability; the mendicant is a stranger to professions, but his heart is sound and

kind at core with the true kindness; he has passed through the thousand gates of Sorrow and has found an angel to welcome him at each; his bleeding heart is bled of anger too. He cares not how he stands; his whole concern is for the truths of which he is the bearer. He neither invites nor rejects labour and sacrifice, joy, pain or earth's delights: he sees all these as a means and fixes his gaze on That which *shines through* all. He lays hold and quits alike indifferently. The grief of another moves him, but not his own, and with him, to be moved is to unfold a deeper Compassion, to pour out more and more Love. If his fellows err, he sorrows silently; if he has erred, he arises and sins no more; without loud grief or poisonous remorse he amends his errors and passes on his calm and quiet way. He acts, not for results, but purely that the Soul may be served. He blesses the Law when it gives and when it takes. His faith is whole and serene; a deep contentment orbs him round. What though from the human side it may seem sad? He is not living from the human side; his source is in the heavens. He is companioned by the Soul and within that Soul which he knows to be himself he has found the Universal. He commits himself to the Eternal, to the Unconscious, to That which has no possessions because itself is All. He is merged into the mystical Deep. His ever-widening mind becomes a breath and

embraces the universe. Whatever the seeming of the outer man, the Disciple-Soul moves on: we have no scale to weigh it by, no means of measure or comparison. Yet we may know that the Vow of Poverty has borne its fruit; the disciple inherits the earth, and for him the Beatitude may be more mystically translated:

“Immortal are the votaries of the Breath, because theirs is the Realm of the Over-World.”

Before the aspirant can become one of the Companions, he shall have taken the Vow of Poverty. Now this poverty shall be intimate and interior.

And when one of them is attacked the Companions shall defend him, because he is their brother. But they shall defend him without malice and without aggression, because he is their very Self.

In that Self are the aggrieved and the aggressor; the minute and the inexhaustible; the good, the evil and that which is the Cause of both.

THE PURPOSES OF SOUL.

ONE night I watched with my dead.

This comrade was smitten in departing ; his soul cried out through the body : "*Oh ! my wasted life.*" Silence followed ; for him the silence of high spheres ; for us, the silence of the grave in that dark hour, above which exhausted faith could not lift us. It was an hour of bleak despair, and, beneath that, an icy blank.

Yet other hours dawn for the student when a voice out of negation cries : "Look in thy heart and write." In such an hour, the cry of the departed one was illumined as by the awful torch of Truth. For there is terror for the human soul in that great glory ; it blinds as with tempest and pain.

"Oh ! my wasted life." Yet he had worked, striven, done, apparently, all. But the high soul knew well indeed that all had not been done ; the conscience-stricken mind confessed its failure.

I wish, my comrades, that we could live our lives, as it were, upon the slopes of death, trying their issues by the light of the new dawn of conscious-

ness. Think you we should not find, by that test, that these lives are full of small issues, tortuous, involved, guided by the opinions of the mass and the needs—not so much of our own bodies and minds, but of those of a complex civilisation? The unseen currents pour upon us, through us; the pictures and suggestions thrown upon us by them, as upon a screen, are mistaken for “our own” thoughts and wishes. These are the traps of nature to detain us, as matter attracts and detains spirit. Can we not wish and think what we *will*, from our own centres, in accordance with the impulse of our higher mind? Is it not our first duty to do this; our duty to mankind and to ourselves; to the Law above all? What avails it, think you, to creation or to ourselves, if we allow so-called consideration for others to imbed us more deeply in the material life? Is it not for the higher good of all that we should remain apart from it, even while in it? Apart in thought, in heart. To yield to another is sometimes to assist that other in encumbering his higher soul and our own with details the mind should outgrow, but to which, lacking strength, it still clings. It clings for fear of loss, forgetting that it cannot lose its own. Could we not simplify, think you, if we saw death drawing near, a sheaf of wasted years in his hands? In the death-moment, when those years flash across the abnormally quickened brain; when the evolutionary purpose stands clearly forth; when

the life result is tested by that purpose and we see that the intent and impulse of the reincarnating Ego have been crushed under innumerable petty details of a life foreign, for the most part, to the *real needs* of souls, how is it with us then? A dread accountant appears, the scales of justice in his hands, a look of alienated majesty on his brow. It is the Master, the Higher Self, denied, outraged, to whom we cry : "I have sinned before heaven and against thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son."

What, then, is this evolutionary purpose? Listen! *We are the Sons of God.* May we reverently consider the Deity.

There are things too mysterious, too awful for expression. Therefore when speech is attempted, others say : "But I know that." They do not know it, for to know it is to be and do it. Therefore they only know some minor differentiation, which they still neglect.

Consider with me the One Life. "The One Ray multiplies the smaller rays. Life precedes form, and life survives the last atom of form. Through the countless rays proceeds the Life-Ray, the One, like a thread through many jewels." This Ray is the Mystery. It is a conscious Flame. It vibrates in the Dark Centre ; it arises ; it flashes forth ; it is the Knower ; it swallows up the merely human consciousness and sets itself on high, the Crest Jewel of Wisdom.

There is only one way of study. It is this. We must permit that Power to set the lower mind aside. It is ready, every hour of our lives, to declare the evolutionary purpose, the next step; our part is to listen. How then shall we listen and how attract the voice of the Power?

The first step is Resignation. That we know. It is the instant, unceasing acceptance of all results, as fruits of the Law. The next step is Devotion. It evolves causes of a nature sufficiently selfless and pure to ensure higher results. They are higher inasmuch as they make nearer approach to the universal. This Devotion is the interior preparation of a ground in which the spirit can freely act. By it we hold the mind in concentration upon the Supreme. We encourage it to remain there. Surface waves come and go, but the deep inner attitude invites the Power. Even in the outward it acts, as such thought directs the attractive and assimilative processes of bodies and organs. The myriad atoms, each a life, which we absorb every instant, are for or against the evolutionary purpose as our thought is with it or withdrawn from it.

A formula cannot be given, but we can make an approach to one. Krishna said: "With all thy heart place all thy works on me; prefer me to all things else; depend upon the use of thy understanding and think constantly of me; for by doing so thou shalt by my divine favour, surmount every difficulty

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which surroundeth thee." Even in the tumult of our lives this can be done. We must treat our bodies and minds as weak places to be strengthened and upheld. Therefore religious observance is useful. Begin the day with an instant of devotion, and end it so. Standing, with reverential attitude of body and mind, repeat aloud some verse of the scriptures, the mind fixed on the Higher Self, or on the One Life, the aggregate of these selves. Such texts have a life of their own; their spoken word will quicken ours. "The ever unknowable and incognisable *Kârana* alone, the *Causeless* Cause of all causes, should have its shrine and altar on the holy and ever untrodden ground of our heart—invisible, intangible, unmentioned, save through the 'still small voice' of our spiritual consciousness. Those who worship before it, ought to do so in the silence and sanctified solitude of their Souls, making their spirit the sole mediator between them and the Universal Spirit."* . . . It is useless to say that we must take others with us. "The soul goes alone to The Alone." Having thus set the vibrations for the day, let the student consider the One Life in all life. Let him study every event, referring all to the action of the currents of that Life, and not to the centres through which it speaks. Men are but ganglionic centres, repeating the nerve-auric impulse and passing it along. That is to say, they are this for the most part; there are souls who

* *Secret Doctrine*, I., 280, n.e., 300-1.

have achieved their higher being. The student should form the habit of observing the Life-waves, the manifestations of Life, as one. Consider the action of the Life-principle in all things. In food, in air, light, sound, persons, events, the human heart; let him refer all things back to it, back to the plane of force, and try to sense them on that plane, to see Krishna in all. This service is no sinecure. But the Lord will repay. Strange lessons will be learned. Life will be seen as made up, not of persons and events, but of manifesting currents, some of which may be rejected and some accepted at the bidding of the inner voice. It alone should command, and not probabilities, eventualities, or temporising. He who asks, of every crisis, but the simple question, "What is my duty?" and does that regardless of events, to that man the gods appear. He will often find that we do many things because the Life-impulse is checked by some counter-current of sympathetic attraction, which, by contrary vibration in specific centres, blocks its way. Then the general current urges the accomplishment of the thought or action, in which accomplishment the counter-current finds equilibrium, is neutralised, and the main current is re-established. This is the impulse of Nature. If we recognise the counter-attractions as Karmic illusions, and do not pour our mind into their moulds, the attractions disappear because we have fallen back upon the higher one, the Universal Life,

whose flow in us we have increased until it sweeps all obstacles away.

Thinking thus always of the One Life in the outer circumstances of our days, there is still another thing we can do. The Deity is always manifesting in us, as everywhere. It impels us by means of impulses springing deep within us and registered upon the consciousness; registered further upon the brain in the proportion in which that brain is prepared to receive it. This preparation consists in keeping the thought turned expectantly toward the One. We need to keep watch for its commands; to learn to distinguish these from lower impulses, suggestions from without, so to say. Above all, we need to obey them. Increase and continuance come from use. While we fulfil the real duties of external life (which are fewer than we think), this interior watch can be kept up. We can be observant of all the impulses arising in us. Who has surprised the swift Will upon its hidden throne or Motion, the power behind the throne? Only the man who has waited upon the gods. We are here for the purposes of soul.

At first we shall make mistakes in action, but soon an uneasy, subtle undercurrent of warning or dissatisfaction will accompany action which has not been suggested by the true Source. In practical occultism, regular chelas of a group set down

all the events of each day ; these are compared, and a guiding current is soon seen. Soon they distinguish this from every other *by its tendency* ; in the unencumbered field it manifests in glory and power. This course must be followed by him who desires to avoid the death-cry of a wasted life. He must also give a fixed time daily, were it but five minutes, to the consideration of The One. He must hold this ground sacred against every invasion. If he be so fortunate as to know the face of a Master, let him bring that before him as an embodiment of the Deity, trying to see it clearly before him in every free moment. "If it be a real Master, he will send his voice. If not, it will be the higher self that will speak." This subconsciousness, this undercurrent of fixed attention, of revolution around the One Life, can be cultivated, and enlarges our orbit.

The true student will not speak of the Unknown One. He will be devotional in attitude and in manner when studying high themes. Such habits train the body and free the mind. The place of study should be as simple as possible, and due regard should be had to the making or breaking of currents, for these are *the messengers of the gods*. At such times all externalities should be firmly set aside, and a place cleared in life for the use of the Deity, nor should others be permitted to overrun this place, whether in opposition or in love. Example

is our highest duty. We must point out the Star of the Law. If we allow the pain of another—pain unrighteous—to draw us from our duty to that other and to all, we have in so far helped him along the path of future despair. True Love is Wisdom. Is not my best goal that of my comrade also? Then I am not to linger in delights of self with him, but to draw him up to the light. Will he not come? Then I must go on and do my duty. His pain is resistance to Law.

It is a sad truth that the love of friends and associates often binds them and ourselves. A true lover of humanity says to the Beloved: "The Soul is free. Be free, Beloved! Wait upon the inner impulse; follow it alone. If thou art mine, I cannot lose thee. Spiritual gravitation makes for us. If not mine, I relinquish thee to thine own ray. Even so, thou art mine, as all are myself and thee in the One. I question not thine impulse, thine act. Come; go; do; abstain. The same law is mine." Rich rewards, revelations unguessed await him who loves thus. It is the only right Love. For if I tell another he is free to do as he will, and yet question the wisdom of his impulse or display my pain, is the liberty real? Not so. If I feel pain, it is my service to conquer that ignorance. If he errs, then he learns that lesson. Oh! for a wider trust in the Law. Then the Deity would speak. The life would not be

overlaid with material shapes and forms of fear. It congests in these moulds. Obeyed every hour, the evolutionary law would manifest. Alas, my comrades! These friends cling to old observance and diurnal habit because in them they know us; they take these to be our established character, the guarantee of our love, and fear to lose us by losing these. And we do the same thing.

I make a great call for Freedom. I raise this standard reverently. Not license attracts me, but Freedom under Law. Freedom to clear a spot where we may listen, hear, obey. That spot Arjuna was told to sit upon because it was his own. Freedom to lop off the excrescences of life; errors of action, errors of thought. Freedom to speak the real mental fact now present to us, without encountering the wounds of affectional habit. Freedom to accept facts as they are, without personal tincture or emotion, so that we may study their meaning with our comrades, accomplishing thus a higher bond, with hearts that accept the freedom of soul. If any others are pained by the Soul's obedience to the laws of her Being, it is our slavery and not our souls they love. Each should see and desire to unveil the higher nature of the other, that God may become manifest in him. The Power only manifests in the free. A soul denied essential freedom, in escaping at death, appeals to the great ones to witness its wrongs, and the Lipika record

the penalties of the Law. Mistakes made through "Love" (too often mere attraction or synchronous vibration on one or several planes, without root in the highest bond) do not save us from Karmic retribution. True Love is Cohesion. The One Ray is known also as Eros, because it expands freely to all; freely expands, freely obeys the impulse given by the Eternal. No Love is worthy of the name which is not a sub-ray or copy of That, and "perfect Love casteth out fear." No life so environed that it cannot prepare for the Power. We say we desire the Light and the Path, but we do not use the keys given us, while yet we ask for more, for other ways. There is only one way, and it will be harder to take in each successive life after man has been offered the keys and refrains from using them. We can never break away from the Material, to turn upward, without a shock. It will never be easier than it now is, to cut our way through.

Thus in the death-watches spoke a voice to me. The eloquence of wasted lives cries aloud to all the nights of Time. It has cost others blood and tears to learn these things. May you learn at less cost. May the One Ray shine upon us. May we know our whole Duty. AUM.

The spiritual is its own proof. Only to Consciousness can Consciousness be known.

“THE FIRST STONE.”

“He lifted up himself and said unto them : ‘He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.’”

St. John VIII. 7.

IN all diviner history there is no incident which comes nearer to the heart of the sinner than this one.

Comes it as close to the heart of the “good man”? I think not. The “good” (self-styled) have often praised it in my hearing, and upright minds have called it “touching” that Jesus should have stooped thus to the sinner; yet it would seem that the incident has not come so near, has not laid a touch so tender upon the heart that the virtuous have cried out: I, even I, Lord, am the greater sinner in that I exalt myself; forgive thou me!

When we refrain from casting stones, how often do we not invest ourselves with merit, in that we refrained? How often in the solitude of the soul, has it come to us to consider that first stone and the right to cast it?

Who, by Divine Law, possesses that right?

Only the sinless; that is to say, only he who is made perfect through Compassion: he who will never use that right because his very nature forbids it, he alone may use it. If the Christ-Light judge, the judgment is true, yet it adds: "Ye judge after the flesh: I judge no man." While the sins of the flesh, the body, alone are sins to our generations, the Christ demands absolute spotlessness of no man: it is not written, he that hath *never* sinned, let him cast the first stone, but on the contrary, the divine permission is given to him who is now without sin. Matchless Compassion, which having passed on through a universe of sin and sorrow to perfection, refrains from casting the cruel stones of upbraiding, anger and scorn at the sinner, because—what is the reason? Because to do so were to forfeit Compassion's self, the very crown and forefront of perfected Being.

And we, casters of stones; what of us? What of our right, whether exercised or foregone with self-applause? Where do we stand? We stand in the shadows amidst which a faint reflected light pales and wanes, and the deepest of these shadows impinging thickly upon the light is that poisoned shade cast by our self-esteem.

Yes, we esteem ourselves. We take up the balance saying: Of course I am not perfect. I have done wrong. Even often, I may have done wrong (evil is too strong a word). Thou, Lord knowest

my peculiar difficulties. Here I fell perhaps ; but there I stood ; thou knowest. On the whole the record is not altogether bad. But I sinned not as this one did ; so far as that other fell, I fell not.

And the Lords of Compassion look down ; they grieve for that man whose heart has never whispered : *I fall with every sin my brothers sin.*

They know, the sinless Lords, that until a man has become the just man made perfect, he continually shares in the sinning of the whole world. Not as a sentiment. As a fact. A hard, unrelenting fact ; the stone Fate casts at us who put it into Fate's hand. These sins which touch our home, our family, our nation, our era : which defile Life for us all ; how come we into contact with these effects if we were not sharers of the remote causes ? Did we not assist in setting the causes into motion, we who are now sufferers from their repetition in other forms ? This must be true, if justice and law reign, otherwise we are the victims of chances blinder than ourselves.

Consider that if one half of us were indeed sinless, the other half would cease from sinning under the impulsion of those spiritual potencies of which perfected men are the generators and distributors. The erring ones would be wrapped in an atmosphere so benignant that they, peace enfolded, would cease to sin. Each one of us, sinners all, has that atmosphere within his reach. Yet many of us

prefer to reach for the stone instead. Pitiful spectacle ! Man, self-weighed, and self-excused ; Man with all the sins of ages passed in Matter thickly encrusted on his sphere ; Man, confining his gaze to the limits of to-day shocked at the sin of another, a sin, perhaps, to which he felt no urgent tempting (or has he overcome it and hardened in the pride of Victory ?) ; Man, the disinherited, adjudges pardon to himself and a stone to his fellow sufferer. At the rebuke of the Christ, this man that each one of us is, turns not to the sinner to lift and aid the erring one ; no, we go out, forgetting that in turning from the sinner we have turned from the Christ-Light also. But these two are left together.

Two poles of Being. And the one has instant power to purify and uplift the other.

If in the parable the sinful woman typifies the passive, inactive, material part of us, are we not again brought face to face with the saying : " Inaction in a deed of mercy becomes an action in a deadly sin " ?

Before we take the stone in our hands, or use aught which that stone represents, were it not wise ; were it not according to our beloved repute for fair dealing ; were it not eminently respectable and conformable to all the marks of the beast of Self-Esteem that we examine our own position for any possible weak point in it ? Weak points have a way of revealing themselves under the touch of

Time ; were it not well to anticipate that ruthless hand and the jeers of the adversary and, discoverers of our own feebleness, to become, perchance, our own saviours ?

The weakness of our position in regard to condemnation of others would appear to come primarily from an erroneous conception of Time. To-day I stand for Virtue ; thou for Sin. In this view, one life is all.

Notwithstanding that view, when the Lords of Compassion look down upon the soul of a man, they see the long series of lives which blossomed from that soul according to its will and its desires, a living chain, link upon link, each link intertwined and every link a life. To us, this present life stands as a separate thing, cut off from the Great Life, a solitary sub-division of Time, and in it we are virtuous (fairly so) or sinning (not too deeply for our own pardon) ; not sinning, at least, by any of the sins especially condemned by our own era. But to those heavenly Lords this life is a to-day in which sin's energy may be momentarily exhausted in us, while yesterday and other days, lives in the long human life-period, may be full of sin. He whom we judge to-day for this life's sin, may have been virtuous in lives where we herded with the foulest swarms of matter and our self-complacency with its smooth face portends a degrading return to that materiality incarnate if we destroy it not.

There is ground for reflection in the fact that the only class Jesus persistently condemned were those proud pharisees, hypocrites, those who thanked God that they were not as other men were ; and take it as history, or take it as parable, this points to a stable truth in one's nature. When Christ judged, his judgment was true, "for I am not alone [in it?], but I and the Father that sent me." Not a mystical or spiritual thinker ever lived who did not insist upon the occult fact that meekness opens the doors of the kingdom ; that pride and the Christ-Light are never found together. If we look ever so briefly into things unseen but mighty we find that this must be so, that the forcible compression, the hardening of Thought and Thought-ether around an image of our own greatness must prevent the passage of forces more divine. The very convolutions of the brain are altered and refuse passage to "the fires"—and so the Light and the Father are shut out. Wretched men, imprisoned thus from the Great Vibration !

Ah, yes ! I have heard of a convict who escaped ; he amended and hid his life. He attained to wealth, repute and was conspicuous for his virtue. Also for a "healthy" dislike of all "morbid sentiment in dealing with the criminal classes. Hard horse sense is what they need ; they made their bed, let them lie on it." At his death he was found out and men wondered, and condemned this specialised

hatred ; you and I perhaps among them ; you and I who, sinning not this life (perhaps), condemn those who are now exhausting the lower energies we earlier worked out and must again work out : let us pray that the strongest tide of that future retributive hour may not be our present self-acceptance.

I believe that in the sight of the Lords of Mercy we all wear much the same likeness.

If a man believes that we reap what we sow, can he cast the stone ? Knows he not that it will rebound upon his own life course, deadlier for the deadly intent with which he cast it ?

If a man believes in reincarnation, dares he cast the stone ? Oh ! by all the sins of the long, long past, No ! By those sins which have brought us where we stand to-day, ignorant, limited, fettered, diseased in body and mind ; slaves to the outer senses, prisoners, from the interior senses, orphaned of the Light ; by our abject condition to-day, No ! Poor tools, poor sport of Destiny ; shall we lift our feeble hands for the first stone ? If we had the right to cast it ; if we had lifted ourselves from the mud where we stand—and it was our duty to have done that—then we would now be able to stand alone with the sinner, uplifting him with a wise compassion. We prefer instead to go out from the Christ.

Little children, little children ; look for the Light

and cease groping for stones. By that Light, I believe that a great sinner may oftentimes be one in whom the human soul has entered into labour pangs of the new birth! Yes; I believe that sin may be the last fermentation of the human nature mightily working toward clarification and that he whom I condemn may be about to drink the new wine of the Kingdom. There are those to whom the Christ has descended even while men stoned them for "ascertained facts."

And do we say that the Divine uses only pure vehicles? Yet is Spirit invariably linked to matter, atom for atom, in the manifested worlds, and in that does its eternal work. We forget that the Divine sees not as we see them, our poor fractions of separated Time, but hears the ever-sounding Now. We forgot—did we not know it?—that *I am holier than thou* is written on the inner side of the gates of hell where self is the gate-keeper. We say, in this forgetfulness, that our Elder Brothers, the perfected ones, would not use such a man, would not do thus and so, implying that we know the whole of Divine Law and have shared the counsel of perfection. And then, last and blindest folly, we say that if the Masters would do such a thing as this or that, we, even we, would turn from them. Be it so. We do turn from them. Often. Yet they wait. Ages long is their patient waiting.

One would suppose it inconceivable to all but devils and maniacs that we, who know absolutely nothing of the most ordinary facts in Nature, and the Soul, should first admit the possibility of wise and perfect Beings and then expect them to judge by our small code and blinded vision. Yet we do not find it so difficult to believe that they might use *us* as agents, or cover *us* with pardon. If any one amongst us or apart from us manifest the binding power and harmony of the Over-Soul, we have got to admit that It judges not as we judge but descends where it lists.

These thoughts are not apologies for sin; not apologies for any man or woman or agency of the Divine Breath. Those who believe with me that we have some forgotten share in every sin of which we hear, will understand this. As Life liveth! I believe that the condemned are so far purer than their self-instituted judges, that the Light, the Searcher of hearts, alone can enter into understanding of them. Our self-purification is futile, It alone purifies.

In all this is naught against civic law and order. It adjures us all alike to refrain from the interior mental attitude of condemnation—even of ourselves. It would but light a taper in the night, that we may avoid the stones we have cast, the abysses these have dug, the barriers builded of them, shutting us from the living Day. Thinking of

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these, my heart, refrain from the first stone. Draw apart from the turmoil, the fever and the pain. See the great Self in all, and mingling with its harmonies, see that all tend towards that Self by paths as diverse as the minds of men, but tending to, deriving from, a single point; **THE HEART**. And, on that Heart reposing, find it to be—thine own!

Before man, the lowest immortal, can find the true Master, he must lose Him; that loss is pure gain. To lose Him thus, is to find Him indeed.

This should be known: the disciple who finds Him on the plane of the senses has objectivised his Karma: he loses the Master after a higher fashion.

When he speaks through the soul, the ignorant disciple says, "it is I myself"; he rejoices to be so wise.

Know that there is only the **ONE SELF, THE MASTER**, and lose thyself also to find Him who is never found until He has been lost.

When He is lost to every sense then the One Flame arises, pure as before the beginnings of worlds.

This thou shalt never know: thou art **IT**.

THE DEEP HEART.

A SHORT time ago the Observer walked along a quiet street approaching one of the great thoroughfares of the city. All at once the droning air was stirred, grew tense, concentrated and broke into a cry, a cry repeated by a score of voices, and all about him, from all parts, suddenly appeared an excited mass of human beings, bearing towards one point where they gathered, intent and swarming. One moment—an empty street: the next—a great human drama: sidewalks, doorsteps, balconies, the very roofs, were alive with humanity. The clamour of the fire engine, the clang of the fire bell and trample of eager hoofs had not evoked this multitude; their advent was simultaneous. Whence, then, the summons? A dread silence falls over the crowd, and shrill above the city's drone a woman's shriek is heard. And then the crowd, before the great mansion whose every window and doorway belch smoke and flame, before the delayed ladder-wagon and the anguish of the

poor creature leaning from the upper window, the crowd utters a hoarse growl of rage, surges towards the firemen, thinks better of it, and sullenly mutters at them; then falls to cursing as the shrieks again besiege the gates of the sky.

The Observer looked from face to face and shuddered. Bitter black faces, wolfish, angry, the teeth shewing behind the parted lips as they gazed upwards; hands clenched and nostrils dilated; eyes burning; throats emitting that hoarse growl. One of their kind was in peril—and each took that peril as an image of the strait himself might be in, and hated those who failed—My God!—who *failed* to snatch himself from the flames. And again the cry of rage broke as the smoke swirled and parted, shewing the woman about to leap to the street, upright and quivering against a back-ground of flame. Then—oh! delirium!—the wagons—the ladder-wagons; and cheers arise; and a hundred hands, a multitude of eyes and voices point out the oncoming hope to her and stay her on the very brink of the mad leap. And yet, she cannot stay. The fire snatches at her; she stoops—and the crowd shudders; she gathers herself together—and a loud moan of anguish goes up and “The ladders! Stop! Stop! the ladders,” and women cling together in an agony of dread, fearing to see, fearing not to see, as the crowd parts and surges backward to make way for that which shall fall amongst them

pursued by the fire. But no! She has turned about, has lowered herself from the window to the broad cornice of the window below, and crouches there upon the narrow ledge, hunted, pursued, smoke-lumined, but, for the moment, safe upon the giddy perch.

A gasp of relief goes up. The firemen have not been idle. Driven back from the doorways they forced open, they hurl themselves upon the ladders; these are raised—and a fusillade of cheers, like scattered shot, breaks from those panting throats. A moan, a snarl, follow. The ladders are too short. Flames, darting from the window above which she crouches, leap upward and backward at the woman; her cries are cries of pain and madden the crowd.

A new hope appears. But see! she moves restlessly—she rises—is she going to leap now, *now*? Ah-h-h-h-h. A great cry—as from a single Titan's throat, goes up in the word "Stop! stop!" Gestures of command, of warning, of entreaty, lift every arm. The critical moment! One scaling pole is set against the house. The firemen run up it. Another is lifted—and the fire is unendurable; for one moment more it cannot be endured; the woman—the woman—she is leaping—she has leaped? A burst of thick, evil-smelling smoke conceals the place where she stood. A thud—an engine horse has stamped his hoof, and hysterical

sobs are heard in the swaying crowd. Is it—? No! No! The smoke lifts, and the foremost firemen snatches the poor creature who leans, shrieking, out of the fiery jaws, grasps her at the very instant when she launches herself upon the air. She hangs from his stalwart right arm, a dangling, charred burden. In mid-air she is passed to another man below, and still another, reaches a ladder, stumbles down its rungs, is safe, is here, is here, falling blindly into the arms that reach out for her, is here, on the hither side of Life still. What a cry goes up. She is saved! Oh my Sisters! Oh my Brothers! We are saved. We are returned to the simple daily life wherein we think ourselves so safe till the Unknown seizes us. Women break into loud weeping. One faints and is borne away. A girl flings herself upon the neck of the engine horse and convulsively kisses his broad grey brows. The *gamins* dance and race. Men embrace one another who never met before; others stand smiling broadly, the tears running down their cheeks; one breaks into a frenzy of cursing, his eyes radiant with joy. The crowd, the great, fused, self-magnetised crowd, one with itself and with all other selves, sends out ringing cheer after cheer. And the proud steeds, who have done it all, curvet as they draw their dazzling towers away.

And why—why all this emotion, this joy? asks the Observer. Is it because a fellow-creature,

doomed to a horrid death, bodying forth to each the image of himself or herself in like peril, was saved before their very eyes? Is it possible? A fellow-creature—whose fellowship was denied an hour before and will be denied in many an hour hereafter. A mere serving-maid, one of thousands of souls passed by, ignored. One to spurn in any moment wherein she might ask alms or obtrude an unpleasant self upon our sybaritic selves. One of the many to be used, cheated, betrayed, pursued, trampled upon in the competition for gain, power, pleasure, livelihood, or life. One who a moment ago was Another, but who became all at once to each himself, myself, when set on high, the quivering prey of Danger. One who is nothing, and less than nothing, to us until the human heart feels the "Open Sesame!" of the human cry. That electric force runs from heart to heart and makes them one. He who has not seen the crowd fused to one single heart, focussed to one single mind, a sole thought or aim, does not know the potent charm of humanity for humanity; he does not know the deep roots of the Identity of Souls.

The terrible irony of it! Our fellows are nothing to us but the sources of our power. Then in a moment anyone may become ourself—a cherished self to us—and then he drops back again into the vast seething ocean of souls. He is indistinguishable amid the general pain that is remote from us

until it fastens upon our own vitals and we too sink into that bitter wave.

The Observer went his way with bent head. His heart was moved within him, for all his watchful and impassive aspect. That heart spoke.

In every man there is a Great Deep. If he listens it speaks to him. Its melodious life interprets Life. It repeats the riddles of pain and death and confusion, and makes them over into a song—the song which is universal. The Deep Heart spoke thus to that thoughtful mind.

“Humanity is one and indivisible. Individual acts and lives deny this truth. They deride it. A moment of human peril, or enthusiasm, or inspiration arrives. Life—Life itself is threatened; or it is invaded; or exalted. It has a voice. It cries out—a mighty, silent, all-pervading cry. An impulse, more swift than the light, more subtle than the ether, more swift than the sun, darts through the oversoul. It has a station in every mind, a register in every heart; by its possession men are unified, as separate breakers are beaten into one wild wall of storm. Man recognises himself in man; the common identity is seen. That image of Danger or of Hope is himself; with it he weeps, with it rejoices. In moments of great excitement there are no longer men, or men and women; there is only Mankind, only the Brotherhood of Humanity.

"This sentiment is the source of sympathy, that sympathy which is the only vicarious atonement, for by it alone, and in its exercise, man puts himself in the place of another with whose pulse his pulses beat. This sympathy is the great interpreter, the world opener. It penetrates all barriers. It is identity of consciousness. He who can identify himself with the consciousness of one other self, of one other thing, is upon the occult path of adeptship. From this sympathetic identification of self with all things, and all things with self, not even the creatures are shut out. Universal Brotherhood does not stand for humanity only. It stands for the 'identity of all souls with the Oversoul' where every atomic life is a soul."

So mused the man. The Deep Heart of him spoke again.

"But why wait for the sharp sudden moments to know our brother? Often we know him only when he has gone from our eyes; when his abandoned husk lies before us. Then we mourn for the winged soul—thing of air and fire—which we behold not, but which was hidden from us in the heart we so often wounded, so often denied. Ah! wait not for these crises in which to be kind to one another. See how often remorse attends the dead. Let not compassion come up tardily to the brink of the grave. Be wise, be merciful, know the brother heart now; *now*, while it lives, suffers, needs, and

hungers at your side. These lightning moments of storm reveal men to one another as each traveller sees the face of his fellow in the lurid breaks of the tempest. In that tempest who can work? Know one another in the broad light of the common day. Feel with one another now. Work each for the other now. Hope in one another now. Wait not for flame and despair to fuse your hearts. Let brotherly sympathy anneal them now, before it is too late for useful action, before it is too late for that sublime hope which lies in the conquest of self for the evolution of all higher selves. There is but one moment for brotherly love. That moment is the eternal NOW.

The true Master is felt; He is not seen.

When He who was unseen is seen, He disappears.

Then the spiritual Presences are gathered into the Unity; they know not one another, but they are the One Self.

In that Darkness there is but One.

In that Silence there is no knowledge, but Being—
—which is all—is fulfilled.

This is the path of the true disciple.

SELF-EXILED.

I LOOKED out over the night. There was one passed along my road. He passed unnoticed by others, but I saw that he had taken the Vow of Poverty. And when the moonbeams fell upon his brow I saw a mark; it was the brand of pain worn by all the exiles.

Weary and athirst he pushed onward; he stayed not for hunger nor for weariness. His dim eyes were fixed upon the horizon. In them I saw the reflected image of the Far Land.

After him followed the Companions, unseen bearing the mystic gifts in their hands.

And his thirst was so great that it stayed him. He threw himself down, struggling with faintness and pain.

Above him stood the Companions, the silent witnesses. And I said to them: "Is he not our Brother?"

They made no answer, but the Star of Compassion upon their breasts shone out with tenderest light; It irradiated the form of the exile.

"Why do ye not give to him who thirsts?" I said. "Is there no living water?" A Companion held up a cup, full to the brim.

"Give then," I cried. "Give, ere it comes too late."

Then they all turned their sad eyes upon me and I knew that they would have given if they could.

I asked: "Are there any who may *not* drink?"

One answered: "Thou hast said it. He who imposes the conditions under which he will receive, he may *not* drink."

"Is it the Law?" I questioned him. He held out his cup to the exile, saying: "Here is water."

The weary one answered: "It is but the water of the Far Land I thirst for. How should ye have it, ye who come up from behind?" He dipped his finger into the cup and put it to his lips. A cry broke from him: "It is exceeding bitter," he said.

"Yet drink," the Companion answered him.

But the exile turned aside, murmuring: "Purify me that water and then perhaps I may drink."

The Companion sighed, and said: "I have not so received it and I shall not so impart it. It is the Law."

With his hand the exile thrust aside the cup. On it this legend sparkled out upon the night.

"I am that Amrita which in the beginning is as poison and in the end is the water of Life."

The Companions turned and all looked at me.

And I knew that none but himself had power to open the eyes of the exile.

The Companions disappeared, bearing the magic gifts. And through the dark night I heard the sobs of our Brother who fancied himself to be alone. I dared not weep; but I pondered on the awful mysteries of Life.

The Companion offers himself. He is that cup. He is the container of all that he can draw from this universe; the water of Life is not to be contained even by this universe. But each Companion sets his own limits; he contains all that he can.

He then comes to the patient worker, to the exiles who bear the brand. He offers himself thrice.

Rejected the third time, he departs.

Another day—or another life perhaps—there comes another. He too offers himself for acceptance or rejection.

And so the Loving Cup goes round and round, despised and rejected of men.

Men look for it under conditions of their own making. But it was not so received. Without limit or condition it was received; without limit or condition it must be taken.

But that which is rejected of men, is the headstone of the Master Builder.

Such are the stones in the living wall set to protect the race.

THE APPEAL UNTO CAESAR.

WHEN Rome ruled the world, in her Cæsar was focussed all her power. A claimant for Justice, challenging judgment with the cry: "I appeal unto Cæsar!" was answered: "Then Cæsar will hear you." He had taken refuge at the foot of the throne, and men spoke of an appeal unto Cæsar, as a supreme and final step. It evoked an irrevocable decision. Despite the lapse of time this appeal impresses the mind with unimpaired majesty because it is the type of a living truth. The appeal unto Cæsar has eternally place in the spiritual world.

When a man first feels within himself the strange throb of that power which tells of a higher life than that in which he is immersed; when it spurs him away from the material and beckons to him as from glimpses of the spiritual, he looks about him for information, for traces of a course to be pursued. He questions his fellows; he reads many books;

he hearkens to teachers and authorities, both real and nominal. A huge mass of external information is sifted by him, and in the end he finds—confusion. His intellect may be fed for a while, but at last the support of the heart fails it; it is saturated, plethoric, atrophied. He turns then to Life itself. He questions the boasts and the despair, the revelry and the agony; he asks of Love, of Hope, of Fear, and Faith. He contemplates the ideals of all art and the untrammelled freedom of Nature, aiming perhaps nearer to the secret as he marks the inalterable round of seasons, and how winter draws itself together with bitter contraction to burst into the ferment, the vernal revel of spring. He snatches at the wings of dreams; he confronts the phalanx of great problems and the most shadowy suggestions alike; but he has not the clue to the labyrinth; he knows not that this eternal alternation is Life itself, and that he must look deeper still. The heart, unsupported by the intellect, now fails him also. He hears, perhaps, of the teachers of the East, or of the "Leaders of the world" from whom, "*when the wind is blowing*," comes the mystical fragrance which is the ambrosia of the soul.* But the wind is not then blowing (that is—his time has not come in the Law), and it is borne in upon him that he is but one of millions along the centuries who have given a momentary cry out of the press

* Saddharma Pundarika.

of existence, and have then returned contentedly to the "flesh pots of Egypt." He has yet to prove that he possesses, in some degree at least, the power of flight. So he receives no valid or enduring comfort from any of these directions; and meanwhile, all about him, the enticements of Life are plucking at his garments, the currents of the world are urging him to and fro. Here, many desist: he who perseveres listens next *within*. He hears vaguely, now this prompting and now that, in the multiform vacillations of the soul, itself bewildered by the long sojourn in matter; even the inner sanctuary, in which he most trusts, seems to betray his hope. Then if his soul be as yet weak, his thought fails, the spiritual vision fades into the mists, and he resumes the accustomed march of life, keeping "lock step," with his imprisoned companions like one awakening, heavy and unrefreshed, from the phantasmagoria of dreams. We lose sight of him in the struggling multitude; he has leapt from the wave only to fall back into the depths. But he who is strong, rendered stronger still as he gathers to himself the forces he has overcome, now discards all other powers, and takes his resolute stand upon his own nature. He declares that since he can conceive a higher Life, it must exist within his reach, and he wills with an indomitable will to attain it. How, he knows not but he relies upon that inner prompting alone.

Then he makes the appeal unto Cæsar. By Cæsar he is never unheard.

In those shining spheres, where dwell the glorious ones forever, all is peace and silence. A far sound travels up the star strewn cope. The stir of its approach touches the Gods with a tremor; they thrill to it, bending closer, for it has that charm which alone conjures them, the essential charm of humanity.* It is the voice of man, which selfless, is stronger than all the angels, and selfish, is weaker than the dumb plaint of the brute. Perhaps this is the first intelligence of the wanderer received in his Father's house. Perhaps they have heard it coming before, and Life has beaten it back. Nearer it comes and nearer, gaining force as it advances, from the sympathy of heaven's messengers and powers all leaping forth to increase and sustain it; it falls like a star into the sea of eternity which swells to meet it, and ripples spread and overflow, magical, musical and full of healing. Oh! with what exultant flight, and with what a rush of glory the strong voice of humanity cleaves the interstellar space and opens up the way from Gods to men. Along that way, long retarded souls come flocking after, jubilant among the jewelled auroras. Celestial spheres flash responsively; the silver echoes

* In the Hindu and Buddhist books we find this referred to as, the growing warm of Indra, or other Diety, who thus knows that his interposition below is needed; as, when Buddha's father wished to build a lotus pond: then Indra, in one night, had it done.—J. N.

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waken, and God proclaims to God, with solemn triumph, that man once more has claimed his own! "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God, over one sinner that repenteth."* For this hour the God has waited longer than souls can remember. The power of the divine self rests upon the rights of the man who has appealed to it. They are the two poles of a sphere, and the might of the higher can only be universally manifest, below as above, through complete union with the lower. This union ensures immortality to the human soul, and the splendour of distinct fruition to the divine spirit. So when the Higher Self hears the appeal, it responds to the holiest of pledges. This appeal may have been made before in other ages, and the present cry may be the renewal of forgotten vows; or it may now be made for the first time in the first expansion of psychic evolution. For this no special rule can be given. In each life all previous lives repeat themselves, just as the law of reproductive thought or association operates at any cataclysm, so that all similar events may thus be seen. Each sleep brings up all former sleep, and an accident to-day would enable one sufficiently developed to see and feel all the accidents that had before come to the sufferer.† So it seems that there comes

* *St. Luke*, XV., 10 and 7.

† A friend, sitting recently with an injured man, saw in the astral light an accident that had happened to him twenty-five years before.—J. N.

finally one incarnation which repeats with emphasis the sum total of all other lives, so that the man is hurried through the round of experience with furious rapidity. Such an incarnation ripens the period known as "the moment of choice." The actual advent of this period is denoted by the strength of the soul which encounters it: it must *know*, before it can decide. It is not a "moment" in the usual sense of the word, but a period of greater or lesser duration, and I believe it may even extend over several lives. It cannot be entered upon, until the appeal to Cæsar has been made.

This appeal is not really the initiative. The spark within, which we carry from the Father's house as a traveller takes with him the love tokens of his home; that exiled spark awakens. It does so because it has at last heard a messenger from the heavenly mansion, and it asserts its remembrance in answer, just as ties of blood assert themselves when estranged brothers meet suddenly in foreign lands, or as the bonds of humanity draw close, in the automatic and inherent action, before a common danger. The divine spark knows, what the mind of man ignores, and what the soul forgets, and there is peril for its associates, even peril of eternal death. As from time to time the God remembers the wanderer, so its reponsive longings break forth in muffled warning within the troubled breast of man. The Great One, waiting patiently through

the ages, sends airy heralds, an impulse of power, a formless, soundless, vibratory message like a flaming light, down the mysterious thread which connects man and God as the moonbeam connects earth and sky. Up that wondrous way every aspiration of man must travel, and down it scintillates the responses of that enduring Love by which alone we live.

He who is strong now passes into a blank darkness, which no power can penetrate for him : from the vortex of pain he suddenly snatches his soul and places it upon the outer edge of peace. Then he must find his way into the heart of the silence.

He is answered, I said ; but he does not always hear the answer. The spiritual language is not understood by him. At first, the echoes of his own need are all that come back to him, fraught with a majesty and a pathos from the spheres they have touched, which often intoxicate him into a passion of self pity. He does not recognise that this added grandeur is the olive branch brought him from beyond the waste of waters ; that it is a guarantee of the divine hearing. He does not know that its significance enters his heart, his eyes, his speech, and that in the added dignity of his mien, weary seekers feel blindly an assurance that the higher life exists. They feel, though too often unable to translate clearly, that another has called upon Cæsar and that the Supreme Power lives. He has

touched It for a moment, though he knows it not, and all are heartened though none may discover it of himself or of the others.

A certain melancholy then floods the heart of the seeker. It is a sadness sweeter than the ringing clamour of worldly joys; its aftertaste is gracious and not fevered. It is "that which in the beginning is as poison, and in the end as the water of life."* He continues to meditate and to search his soul; to look for truth apart from his conceptions of it; to distinguish the necessities of his lower nature from the intuitions of his higher nature (though both seemingly speak through the one voice), and to send up aspirations to the God, who responds with a vivifying shower of new hopes. He feels them faintly. For as the ray of light speeds to his succour, it encounters the material darkness in which he lives. A small portion of it may pass through and invigorate his heart, but part is refracted by the things about him, reflected in the surface thoughts and customs of the world and reaches him distorted and falsified. Then, too, the more powerful the ray, the more the darkness, receding before it, impacts itself about him, denser than ever, and the faults, the errors nearest his heart are driven home and hold riot there. So it often happens that when rescue is nearest it seems to the beleaguered one immeasurably remote, and

* *Bhagavad-Gītā*, ch. 18.

that the response of Cæsar seems to condemn him in the mocking voices of despair and sin. Men fancy that the answer of the Divine Self must bring peace; it is not so at first. Jesus said: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword."* There is much warfare yet; only through it do we enter into the peace. We have to wrestle with the power, as Jacob did with the angel, before it will wholly bless us. When it does so, it is for the sake of humanity and man must make his appeal for the same reason. This is the rite of sacrifice which the *Gîtâ* speaks of as having been instituted from the beginning—this interchange with the Divine. Having consciously appealed, we have challenged the Supreme: we have placed ourselves within the grasp of the law and the compact must be kept. Nor can we advance until then. A Master once wrote to one who asked to become his disciple: "May the powers to which you have appealed *be permitted by still greater and much higher powers* to help you." He meant the Great One and the Law.

I knew a seeker after truth who was beaten back at every point. He lay prostrate in despair under the most awful weight that ever crushes the human soul. All his nature cried out for God. He felt a touch that rolled the stone away and looking upward, he beheld in the air above him a shape of

* *St. Matthew*, ch., X., v. 34.

light all calm and resplendent, whose aspect was a transfiguration of his own. More I know not, but this my brother who was lost has been found again.

There are many of you, my comrades, who stand in just this stead ; you have called and you have been answered ; but you have not heard. You will say to me : " How shall we hear, and how interpret the voice ? " I cannot tell you this ; there are as many ways as there are men. Each of you, and he only, is judge of himself ; he and Cæsar. But I can assure you that every aspiration you feel, and the renewal of them, are messages from the God. His replies may take the shape of added sorrows and gathering storms, for all these are the means of your trial and your growth, and you have elected them yourself, sowing their seeds in other lives. Try then to look upon each as just the help which you now need. So long as you have an unselfish thought, you are not deserted ; so long as you have faith, you have heard. This succour stands fast in the True ; it can never be uprooted, severed or lessened. It is your inheritance, your right which no one can deny you but yourself. Even your ignorance can only obscure it. The true voice will speak to you of the sorrows of the world, of the grand futurity of mankind, of your diviner Self.

The hour of appeal is the pregnant moment. If you lose it now, how long may you not have to wait, powerless dreamers in the heavenly lands,

tasting rich rewards which fail at last? Then you must return again from that world of effects to this one. Seek the world of cause instead. Causes are sovereign; they alone are eternal.

Amid the roars of the world, the stupendous rush of its fierce tides, the swoop of its hurricanes, the fell power of its lightnings which reveal only darkness to the seared soul; amid its miasmatic pettiness, amid its joys and its better hopes, cling still to that one thought which, like the sea-gull, can well outride a thousand storms, the thought of that Humanity which shall merge into Divinity; the thought of the Self, the All. Strengthen it with all the love of your heart, all the sweetness of your nature, and send up a mighty cry to heaven. For when through the spirit, the man wills, when his soul soars to claim its right, then distant spheres are shaken and Being is apprehended. Appeal! Appeal unto Cæsar!

An active charity is the legitimate outcome of the sole article of our confession of faith—Universal Brotherhood. This is a term fitted to convey to all minds in all languages a clear, distinct, and ethical idea. It covers and conveys in its highest sense the truth of the “spiritual identity of all Being” on which alone can a real universal brotherhood, true in fact as well as in potentiality, active on all planes alike, be based.

SUFFERING.

LAST night I saw in a dream, a man. He was weak, poor, an exile; his feet were torn, his wounds bled, his heart bled also. He cried out to heavens that were brass; they sent forth a dull reverberation, a sullen thunder, in reply. Around him was blackness; in his soul was a grim despair. This wretched, hunted, abandoned creature gazed wildly about him, finding nothing upon which Hope might rest, not even Death, for he knew he could not die before his time. All Life passed before him as he stood at bay, and mocked him in every tongue.

I heard a sigh as if some one beside myself grieved at this piteous spectacle and, turning, I saw One who seemed to be a guide of the country and to whom the sufferer appeared to be known. Of him I made enquiry.

“Can no one help that man?”

“Oh yes. There is one who can help him.”

“Who is that?”

“Himself!”

“Why does he not help himself, then?”

“Because he suffers so much. His suffering engages all his attention.”

“What, then, is the cause of this great suffering?”

“Himself,” said the guide, and smiled. This smile revealed a divine pity, more tender than tears. It opened my heart, so that I said:

“Teach me more of this strange Self which is at once his persecutor and his Saviour.”

“Nay,” replied that guide; “thou shalt ask thyself that question, for that Self is thee also, and every other man as well.”

Then I awoke, understanding very well that we suffer from ourselves. And I could see, too, how each man was the sharer of the experience of others, for is there not that rare, tenuous æther in which every human sphere is suspended, feeling every current, every thought, every struggle of all its neighbours, of the whole vibrating mass, and translating every vibration into thoughts of its own quality in the wonderful mechanism of the human brain? Could I not see well how these thoughts, in their dynamic and formative energy, moulded that æther into pictures which lived, moving along currents that were baleful or beneficent in their action upon other spheres, according as they caught the tone of the mass, or failed to reach it? This tone was given by the Great Law Itself as the appointed chord to and by which all spheres should

be regulated, in order to vibrate in unison, and, where any sphere failed to do so, vibrating at its own choice and out of time and tune, the whole æther was violently agitated, its current of light rendered turbid, its melody disturbed, destroyed. Well I saw that what was mainly required for the restoration of harmony was that each human sphere should accept without resistance the great currents of the Law as these impinged upon it. Of course at first, many of them would suffer internal confusion for this sudden change of motion; they would experience Pain, and even disintegration in some parts. But those who had the courage so to suffer for the restoration of general harmony would soon find a new and higher form of organisation crystallising within themselves, just as the music of the master's bow causes the sand particles to thrill and to range themselves in ordered patterns of beauty, or as at the magnet's mysterious message iron filings range themselves into the same polarised lines as those of the human brain. Yes; what was imperatively needed was that every human creature should stand still long enough to feel the currents of Law sweeping through his life, and then think with and obey them. In other words, the first step is Resignation.

In the year whose last sands slip by as I write, many cries have fallen upon my heart. That heart suffers like every other. This truth gives to each

heart the divine right to understand all the rest. We hear the cry of the exile, and out of our own experience we respond to him. There are so many cases. There are the comrades who wish much to do and to be. They desire greatly to work in the Altruistic Cause. Karmic circumstance fetters them. So they devise plans whereby they may be made richer, or stronger in body, or more free from care and duty, or to gain more ample time in which to work. But that Karma which they themselves have made, and which is their only judge, refuses them these things. Then a deep sadness falls upon them with the failure of their plans; their energies are sapped and wasted by the thousand allies of doubt and despair. They forget that their plan is not needed. What is greatly needed is Harmony. This is only attained by submission. When we accept Karmic environment and go calmly to work to take an inventory of ourselves as we now are, both externally and internally, in all our mental states and ever changing motives, and then ask earnestly what such a man, in such a given condition of life, can do, just where he stands and as he is, to help Humanity, we do find an answer somewhere. We do find some work to our hand. It may be only in Right Thought that we can help, but in that dynamic power we work silently along with silent Nature and the Great Vibration, whose melodies are real, are profound, and heard by the

inner ear alone. In thus spreading the fluidic far-reaching energies of harmonious thought upon the ambient æther, we create currents in accord with those of that Universal Mind whose grand totality is "Angels and Archangels and all the Powers of Heaven." Is this a small power? Not so. By its means we change our whole mental environment; and that in turn will order future Karmic circumstance, so that in the next life, or perhaps even in this, we shall be placed where we shall help our fellows more. That help is their due and our privilege. But I think we place undue stress upon material help. The heart of man is at the bottom of every circumstance. It moulds every event, builds up all societies, determines the character of every age. Reforms that do not reach that strange and hidden heart are built upon the sand. Nothing can reach it but Right Thought, and it is in the gift of every person to turn that reconstructive power loose upon the wild turmoil of our time. This is the Power that stills the waves. Instead of chafing at our limitations and our failures, let us then accept them with harmonious serenity and use them as our instruments. Thus I know a sick person who uses the sympathy evoked by that sickness as a means of gaining the attention of others to higher thoughts. I know a comrade in great poverty who realises that this very poverty gains the ear of those likewise suffering, and of

those too who think much of the material gifts they can bring, and so this brave soul drops a true brave word here and there on the thorny way. By acceptance of Karma we learn great and wonderful things, and a Master has said: "Karma is the great teacher. It is the wisest of guides and the best."

This does not mean that we should sit down supinely and think only. It means that we should accept the inevitable in material life, and gather what spiritual riches we can find, in order to give them all away.

Then, again, come the sufferers through Love, the hearts that cling to the personal sweetness, the strong human ties, the thousand endearing tendencies often cemented by a long, though unknown, Past. Death, separation or life, sweeps between. Or the Beloved suffer, and we cry out. We cry in ignorance. Our Love is never lost. All the Universe makes for Love: that Love is Harmony, is Justice. Not one vibration of it is ever lost. Out of our deep spiritual nature this yearning Love comes pouring, an eternal fountain. Our personal mind translates its meaning in many perverse ways. We take it to mean all kinds of personal desire or hope. That we belie our nature is evident because, when these desires are gratified, the heart is never content with that, but goes on to new desire. It is the sacred truth that, in the very ground of our

natures, a spark burns ever vibrating with the highest Love. All our small personal affections are simply the straying tendrils of this one great root, and ought to draw us inward to it. Our Love rests in the highest bond. We do really desire the highest fulfilment of the loved one's Being. We can, if we will and if we seek, find ourselves consciously reaching up in hope to the perfection of those beloved natures. It is really the Higher Self, the great Ideal One, that we love. The man or woman, its faint reflection, is there to lead us to this blessed Truth. Alas! We find self far too much in so-called love, but I believe—in all conscience I can attest it—that once we get a glimpse of this truth, that our inner natures yearn to help our Beloved to greater heights, we will make a mighty effort to continue in that higher, holier hope. From thus loving one, to loving all, we proceed gradually through the pure overflow, or the natural gravitation ~~of Love~~, until we know nothing of separation. For all starved natures there is then this hope. We are not to love less, but to love more. To expand to fuller conceptions; to realise deeper meanings; to find within the self of flesh and sense, and all the selfish corruption of our natures, these germs of living truths; these meanings we have indeed perverted, but which we are powerless to destroy, because they are germs of that Truth which is One and indestructible,

the "Law which makes for Righteousness," the Harmony which is Love.

Those who suffer will find at the very root of their suffering, no matter of what kind, some revolt against this Eternal Law of Love. We have only to turn round and obey it. We have only to cease desiring to put it to personal use, or to grind personal comforts out of it, and all its blessings and powers are ours. It lives in every heart; it gilds and glorifies every atom; it "stands at the door and knocks"; it is Life, it is Light, it is Peace, for it is Eros, the one Ray, it is universal, divine Love. Oh! my suffering comrades; accept it, embrace it! Live by it, at any cost; die by it if needs be, for so only shall we find Life eternal, only by receiving and acknowledging the Law, only by living in the thought of all beings, in harmony with all and with Love.

"AND he who has come to his own again,
Though he speak no word and sing no song,
Himself is a Voice to the hearts of men :
For the silent Seer, the swift, the strong,
Has touched the radiant vesture spun
By the starry Gods for the Only One."

—ARETAS.

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